

Column

Nothing short of a revolution is needed, if the Church of Jesus Christ is to make its maximum impact in the world. J.I. Packer has summarised what happens when such a revolution takes place: “God comes down; God’s Word comes home; God’s purity comes through; God’s people come alive; outsiders come in.”

Such a revolution happened in Jerusalem during the reign of good King Josiah (c. 639-609 BC). A boy of eight when he ascended the throne, his reign is chiefly remembered for the religious revival that took place during those years.

This religious revival reached its peak in the 18th year of his reign when the “book of the law” was discovered during a renovation of the Temple. When the book was presented to Josiah, he not only read it himself, but ordered it be read to the people of his kingdom. God’s Word came home.

Out from the reading of this book, came purity of religion. All forms of idol worship were repudiated, and the spiritual worship which pleases God was reinstated.

“God’s Word came home; God’s people came alive.” But, did in fact outsiders come in? No, not really, and that was always a problem with Israel of old. Though called by God to be lights to the nations, this concept was never fully understood or embraced. I might add, just as it is not always understood or embraced by God’s people today.

Be that as it may, the revolution we seek today must include all components Dr. Packer mentioned, including the last: “Outsiders came it.”

It was Dr. William Temple, a former Archbishop of Canterbury, who said that the Church is the only institution that exists for those outside itself. There is certainly truth in Dr. Temple’s words.

God’s call is not for His people to be little ornamental figurines of piety destined for display in His celestial china cabinet. Rather, His call is to be witnesses in the world. Like Israel of old, we are call to be light bearers, in our community, in our country, in the world.

The Church as well as Western society in general stands in need of a spiritual revolution. A case in point is recent legislation in New York which allows the ending of a child’s life up until the very moment of his birth and

removes legal protections for babies born alive. Who will speak for these children?

A spiritual awakening is needed, but where must such an awakening begin? With awakened people. God's word must come home and God's people must come alive. Will you be one of these awakened people?

ALMIGHTY God, who hast created man in thine own image; Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil, and to make no peace with oppression; and, that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice among men and nations, to the glory of thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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